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April 28, 1998

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Magalie Roman Salas
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20054

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Re: MM Docket No. 87-268
WMAQ-TV, Chicago, IL
Request for Extension of Time

Dear Ms. Salas:

NBC Subsidiary (WMAQ-TV, Inc.), ("NBC"), licensee of WMAQ-TV, Chicago, IL, respectfully requests a three-month extension of time to submit its application for a construction permit for DTV Channel 29 in Chicago, IL.

Section 73.624(e) of the FCC's rules requires a licensee to submit its application for a DTV construction permit on or before the halfway mark of its construction period. The deadline for construction of all network affiliated television stations in Chicago is May 1, 1999.¹ Accordingly, WMAQ-TV's application for construction permit is due by May 1, 1998. However, as described in detail below, despite its diligent efforts to secure a site for its DTV antenna, NBC has been unable to reach agreement with the owner of its present antenna site, or to secure an acceptable alternative site. As a result, we are unable to complete an FCC Form 301 at this time.

WMAQ-TV currently transmits its analog signal from the East broadcast tower atop The Sears Tower, the tallest building in Chicago. There is no aperture on the mast that is available for lease to accommodate a DTV antenna. However, the top 55 feet of the West broadcast tower of The Sears Tower is not being used, although it is under lease to the licensee of Channel 50 (which transmits from a lower point on the West tower). In February 1997, NBC began discussions with The John Buck Company, the landlord of Sears who indicated a great interest in finding an acceptable aperture for our DTV antenna

¹ NBC previously committed to make every effort to construct the DTV facilities for WMAQ-TV by November 1, 1998. However, this commitment was subject to resolving the complicated tower location issue described herein. See April 2, 1997 letter to Commissioners from John H. Rohrbeck, President, NBC Television Stations. As the tower location issue is not yet resolved, construction of the WMAQ-TV DTV facilities will not be completed by November 1, 1998.

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on the West tower. Over the next several months, NBC was told by The John Buck Company that several attempts to start talks were made and that the landlord was in negotiations with the current leasee of that space for modification of the lease to accord us the necessary space. However, in the fall of 1997, negotiations moved at a snail's space, perhaps, as we learned later, because the landlord was in the midst of negotiations to sell the building. On January 1, 1998, TrizecHahn Office Properties became the new owner of the Sears Tower.

In early January, NBC representatives met with representatives of TrizecHahn to impress upon them the need to resolve the DTV antenna location quickly. Since that time, we believe the landlord has been aggressive in its efforts to modify the current lease with Channel 50 to accommodate our DTV antenna. We are in contact with the landlord on a weekly basis and we are optimistic that the situation will be resolved shortly in a manner which will enable us to locate our DTV antenna on the West tower.

At the same time that NBC has been aggressively pursuing locating our DTV antenna on the Sears Tower, we have also been actively involved with the Chicago Digital Broadcasting Committee, an organization set up in June 1997 by 14 television stations in Chicago. This committee has engaged in a search for a location for a free-standing tower which could accommodate the DTV needs of all 14 stations. Alternatives are limited as the Sears Building lacks sufficient aperture space for all the broadcasters; the Hancock Building is considered less than ideal because it is not quite tall enough; and the Amoco Building has no broadcast facilities, isn't tall enough and the owners weren't really interested in locating broadcast towers atop their building. The Committee has been in regular contact with Chicago city officials. These officials engaged their own engineering consultant who concurred as to the desirability of finding a new location for all the broadcasters. The first site identified had to be rejected because of significant environmental concerns. Regular meetings with the city continue and the Committee is continuing its efforts to find an acceptable site.

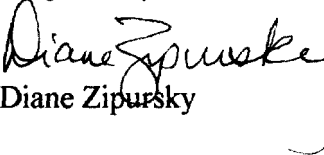
NBC is committed to continuing its aggressive efforts to resolve this tower situation as quickly as possible. We are prepared to sign a commercially reasonable lease with The Sears Tower and commence construction immediately thereafter. We are

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requesting a three-month extension of the application deadline, from May 1, 1998 to August 1, 1998, to allow NBC to bring the current negotiations to a successful conclusion, or, if necessary, to find an acceptable alternative location for our DTV facility.

Please direct any questions concerning this matter to the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,


Diane Zipursky

cc: Chairman William E. Kennard
Commissioner Susan Ness
Commissioner Harold Furchtgott-Roth
Commissioner Michael Powell
Commissioner Gloria Tristani
Roy Stewart
Barbara Kreisman
Clay Pendarvis
Karen Kornbluh